



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Could Household Mold be Making Your Asthma Worse?

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Mold can trigger asthma problems in sensitive individuals with asthma. According to the *Asthma in Utah, Burden Report 2009*, 8.0% of Utahns say they have asthma and 10.8% of adults with asthma reported seeing mold in their homes.

“It’s not known for certain that exposure to mold can cause asthma, but we do know that it can trigger asthma symptoms,” said Rebecca Jorgensen with the Asthma Program at the Utah Department of Health (UDOH). “Mold can trigger symptoms like wheezing, coughing, fatigue and difficulty breathing in people who have asthma and are sensitive to mold,” she added.

Exposure to mold can lead to increased doctor visits or emergency room trips and an overall lower quality of life for people with asthma. Mold can also trigger reactions in people without asthma, irritating the eyes, skin, and lungs.

Mold growth is usually related to excess moisture inside the home. “In Utah, most mold problems are the result of poor drainage, improper maintenance and homes being well insulated and sealed, which doesn’t allow as much air circulation,” said Mark Jones, UDOH Environmental Epidemiology. “Fortunately, mold problems can usually be fixed by cleaning up the source of moisture. So homeowners should repair leaks, reduce condensation by increasing the circulation of humid indoor air, and direct outside water away from the home.”

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The UDOH recommends the following for mold cleanup and prevention:

- If you have asthma or any respiratory disease, avoid contact with mold.
- Mold can grow in areas that are hard to see. Watch for common signs of mold growth including water stains and a musty or earthy smell.
- Check your home often for signs of mold or moisture.
- Wipe up any excess water and dry the area quickly to prevent mold growth.
- If you have or see mold in your home use your resources (time and money) to just clean it up.
- If the area of mold you need to clean is less than about 10 square feet, you can usually clean it yourself. Refer to this Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) resource for help with mold cleanup: *Mold, Moisture, and Your Home*
www.epa.gov/mold/moldguide.html

Tips to reduce moisture and condensation in your home:

- Use exhaust fans when showering and cooking
- Vent the clothes dryer to the outside and don't air dry clothes in the home
- Fix leaks in roofs, pipes or foundations
- Open a window
- Use the air conditioner

More information is available about asthma and mold in Utah by calling the Health Resource Line at 1-888-222-2542 or by visiting www.health.utah.gov/asthma.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.